



United States Mission to the OSCE

On Local Elections in Georgia

As delivered by Deputy Political Counselor Darren Perdue
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 16, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States congratulates the government and people of Georgia on well-administered local elections that concluded November 12. The elections were held in a largely peaceful environment and respected fundamental freedoms. We concur with ODIHR's preliminary report, which noted positively that the candidates could campaign freely and that freedoms of assembly and expression were generally respected. Nevertheless, we also share ODIHR's view that the predominant position of the ruling party underscores its responsibility to ensure that the opportunities of other contestants are not limited. ODIHR also noted reports of intimidation of voters and misuse of administrative resources, though ODIHR's findings suggest improvements between the first and second rounds. We urge the government of Georgia to quickly and transparently investigate all electoral complaints.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

###